



35th Engr. Bde. Soldier killed in combat

Missouri Army National Guard

Missouri Army National Guard Spc. Matthew Straughter, 27, of Belleville, Ill., died of injuries received after his vehicle was struck by a rocket propelled grenade, Jan. 31, in Iraq. Straughter, who would have turned 28 on Feb. 1, was a member of the 1138th Engineer Company (Sapper),



Straughter

during this time of loss," said Maj. Gen. King Sidwell, adjutant general for the

headquartered in Farmington, Mo.

"The Missouri National Guard Family of Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen grieve with and for the family of Spc. Matthew Straughter

in Missouri National Guard.

Straughter joined the Missouri Army National Guard as a combat engineer in December 2005. He was mobilized in July 2007 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 1138th Engineer Company (Sapper) has been conducting route clearance operations while in Iraq. The unit attempts to locate and defeat Improvised Explosive Devices and

maintain traffic flow along military supply routes.

Straughter served on Operation Jump Start, the border security mission in Arizona, from November 2006 to June 2007. During that assignment he assisted in patrols and border protection.

His military awards include: the National Defense Service Medal; Iraq Campaign Medal; Global War on

Terrorism Service Medal; Armed Forces Reserve Medal with mobilization device; Army Service Ribbon; Overseas Service Ribbon; Missouri Basic Training Ribbon and the Arizona Community Service Ribbon.

The Department of Defense official release is available at www.defenselink.mil. Funeral arrangements are pending.

AIRBORNE

Engineer company drops in for recruiting visit



A paratrooper from Co. A, 37th Engr. Bn., lands at Fort Leonard Wood, Saturday.

Story and photos by
Allison Choike
GUIDON staff

For the paratroopers from Company A, 37th Engineer Battalion, Fort Bragg, N.C., it was a normal training day in the skies, Saturday, but their jump delivered a big message to the Soldiers watching on the ground.

While the paratroopers conducted a full airborne operation training mission, the Soldiers from Company C, 795th Military Police Battalion, helped enable them to make the event

successful and also learned they had the opportunity to be just like them.

"Paratroopers definitely love what they do, and they were definitely excited to come here, stop by, speak with the privates, tell them about what they do and what goes on," said Capt. Jason Grubb, Co. C, 795th MP Bn., commander.

Grubb said the combat engineers jump every day at Fort Bragg and they get used to the terrain around them, so from time to time they use other installations for training purposes. This time, the unit coordinated with Co. C,

795th MP Bn. to come and speak about Airborne School while conducting training.

"They (Soldiers) were all able to learn about what the process is and the standards are, and what they have to meet in order to be able to go to Airborne School. They were really excited afterwards, because they found out they were able to meet the standards right now, and others found out what they have to work on," Grubb said.

Grubb said he and the rest of the cadre have worked hard to make sure the experience is all about the Soldiers, and

sometimes there is nothing better to learn from than a good, old fashioned Army experience.

"I know the Army has done a lot of work getting technology put out there to show them (Soldiers) what the Army has to offer, but nothing beats an airplane flying overhead and watching 60 guys jump out of it and land at your feet," Grubb said.

As a Soldier, sometimes your drill sergeant can only show you so much about the Army, and all that it entails and looking beyond basic training is helpful.

"It is always good to show the Sol-

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GUIDON wins first-place for Army journalism

Newspaper moves on to DA competition

GUIDON staff

The 2007 Maj. Gen. Keith L. Ware Journalism competition named its winners this week, and the GUIDON came out on top while competing in the U.S. Army Installation Management Command West Region.

GUIDON placed first overall in the Metro-Format Newspaper category, after coming in second in 2006.

Allison Choike, GUIDON staff, took three first-place honors. She won in the category of commentary with a piece entitled, "Wait at gate may be longer, but look around;" in the category of photojournalism,

"Warfighters combat for top honors in regiment," and was named the Moss-Holland Civilian Journalist of the Year.



Choike

Robert Johnson, managing editor, received second placed honors for his feature article on "Fly fishing fun" and commentary, "Capitalization: Capital idea."

The GUIDON also placed first in special achievement in print media for the "Guide to Training" insert that was created for Soldiers leaving during Holiday Block Leave.

All first-place winners will move on to compete for Fort Leonard Wood at the Department of the Army level in Washington, D.C. Winners will be announced March 14.

Single Soldiers get new home

Village-style apartments to house 180 permanent party servicemembers

Story and photos by
Luke Waack
GUIDON Staff

Fort Leonard Wood's commanding general cut the ribbon, Monday, on a first-of-its-kind single Soldier barracks complex designed to provide quality housing servicemembers will be proud to live in.

The new \$13 million village-style apartments, expected to house 180 unaccompanied permanent party single Soldiers, are located at the intersection of Minnesota and Michigan Avenues.

Maj. Gen. Bill McCoy, Maneuver Support Center and Fort Leonard Wood commanding general, cut the ribbon on the project with the aid of the first official resident, Sgt. Dennis Wilkins, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 577th Engineer Battalion.

"It's important to us that you understand we're going to work you hard, but we want you to have a place you can come home to at night that is quality and that you can be proud of," McCoy told an audience of Soldiers and civilians during the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Soldiers will have private bedrooms, walk-in closets, private vanities, a shared kitchen and a shared bathroom. The complex includes a paved recreation trail, a basketball court and a sand volleyball court.

Spc. Ryan Lewis, Medical Activity, started moving into the new barracks, Monday. Before he joined the Army, Lewis lived in college dorms and compared the two living arrangements.

"This place is definitely better than college dorms. It's much nicer," Lewis said.

The first residents of the new village are moving out of



Maj. Gen. Bill McCoy, Maneuver Support Center and Fort Leonard Wood commanding general, addresses well-wishers and future residents of the new single-Soldier housing during the grand opening ceremony of the village-style homes, Monday. The first phase of construction will house approximately 180 Soldiers.

older housing units across the installation.

"It's a nice change from the buildings on Indiana (Avenue) where four Soldiers share a place. I lived there for six months, and then I lived in temporary lodging at the Noncommissioned Officer Academy. This place is much nicer, much cleaner and there's grass. We want to keep it like

this. It feels like my home, and I want it to be squared away, because it's a reflection of me," said Pfc. Richard Holdren, HHC, 577th Engr. Bn.

Col. John Megnia, garrison commander, hopes that once Soldiers come to live on the the installation, they won't want

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VIEWPOINT

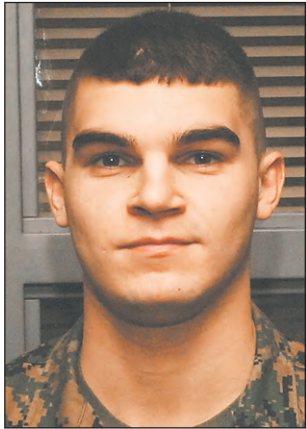
What are you going to do with your tax refund?

By Luke Waack

“I’m going to pay off my credit card and put the rest in savings.”

Marine Lance Cpl. Matt Ilnycky

Marine Corps Detachment



“I’m going to get both of my cars fixed and buy some new furniture. I’ve been wanting to do these things for a while and my tax refund is going to give me the opportunity.”

Tenisha Brown

Military family member

“I’m going to pay some bills off.”

Staff Sgt. Chris Crocker

5th Engineer Battalion



“I am a volunteer firefighter in St. Robert, and I’m going to buy some new firefighting equipment.”

Spc. Mike Nicola

5th Engineer Battalion

“I want a new bedroom suite, and my husband wants a four-wheeler, so I don’t know what we’re going to buy yet.”

Christina Olivo

Military family member



Commentary

Gridiron inspiration

By Allison Choike

GUIDON staff

We were all glued to our televisions Sunday watching

the big game and the commercials to go with it.

Football is an American pastime and the Super Bowl is the epitome of all games.

I love the back-stories that give the game depth and the players who make the game come alive. But for a girl like me, who never really follows football, this year’s game became special because of someone on the sidelines — Lt. Col. Greg Gadson, a friend of the New York Giants.

Call me a last minute fan, but because of this motivational and inspirational person, I was rooting for a team I knew nothing about and hoping they would win — and they did.

Gadson assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery



Choike



Air Force photo

Lt. Col. Greg Gadson, center, receives a football jersey, Sept. 1, from Duke University on behalf of the Soldiers in the Wounded Warrior Program.

Regiment was injured, May 7, when his convoy was hit with an improvised explosive device in Baghdad. Sadly, he suffered serious injuries and lost both of his legs.

Gadson, a friend of one of the Giants coaches, was asked to speak before one of the Giants’ game earlier in the season. He soon became a motivational figure to the team and a friend to many of its members.

He went to as many games as he could, sitting on the sidelines cheering on the team,

even in the dead of winter in freezing temperatures. Being there, he taught the team to never give up, and to always fight in all situations.

As I sat and watched the story about Gadson with the Giant players speaking so highly of him, I looked at the real lesson of this game.

All of it wasn’t about football, the big game or even winning. It was about taking a situation that might not be a great one and turning it into one of incentive, pride and inspiration.

Many of the team members said he played a pivotal role in the season. If Gadson had kept his message of strength and triumph to himself, lessons would have been lost and a drive of an entire team could be different.

The way I look at it is, in a world of have and have nots, pleasure and pain, happiness and sorrow, the most selfless gift a person can give is a personal story that acts as an example for others to learn from and to use for motivation.

Gadson gave the Giants something they needed. It wasn’t a win or perfect season, it was the drive and motivation to get there. And through his actions, he showed the rest of the country his story of perseverance and strength to overcome odds where others might just give up.

Next time you think about football, think about the lessons you could learn from it. I may never know what a counter trap or reverse sweep play is, but at least I know what it takes to get there, and the type of people out there who are helping make it happen.

Contempt is marriage poison pill

By Jacey Eckhart

Special to GUIDON

At first I thought the TV commercial was an ad for a divorce attorney. Turns out it was some kind of tax thing. In the ad, this squirrely-lookin’ husband announces to his wife that they are getting audited. The wife bends over him, concerned.

“Really? Well maybe we should see the people who did our taxes,” she says. Then she sneers at him. “Oh, that’s right. We didn’t use people. We used a box. Well, Greg, let’s ask the box what we should do now.”

The sad little husband doesn’t say anything or even look at her while she holds up the box to her ear and mocks him.

“What’s it saying?” he titters.

“Nothing. It’s a box,” she snaps.

I guess the message is supposed to be that if you want to avoid your wife’s contempt, you’re gonna need real live people working for you.

I’d agree with that. I’d even volunteer to be one of your people. Because I may not know jack about the tax code, but I do



Eckhart

know enough to ask this one question:

What are you doing pussyfooting around with a wife (or a husband) who shows you that much contempt?

That’s right. Contempt. Sneering, mocking, name-calling, eye-rolling, sarcastic, cynical, bitter-tasting contempt. Don’t you know that contempt is a very bad sign in a marriage?

It is an especially bad sign for a military marriage in which we have less time to carry out the business of the relationship.

Psychologist John Gottman, a leading research scientist on marriage and family, has long identified contempt, criticism, defensiveness and stonewalling as major predictors of divorce. Even among these four, contempt is considered the most important indicator that a marriage is in trouble.

And yet, I see that contempt displayed by military couples all the time. It isn’t just the taxes or the payment on the Navigator that makes the spouse display contempt. Instead, I most often see that contempt focused at the military member’s job. The military as a career and a life is written off as selfish, or as “playing in the sand,” or “running around with guns,” or worse — “this is what he does to run away from the family.”

Ouch. I know that the military life requires so much from all of us, especially during a time of war. It is tempting to dismiss this work with the same contempt that we see from all around us — that attitude that the military is for people who don’t know any better or who don’t have any other options available to them. But we must know that adopting that contempt and expressing it aloud move us closer and closer to divorce.

I forget that sometimes. So lately I’ve been using those tax commercials in a way they were not intended. Instead of thinking that I ought to get my taxes done by a company with people, I’ve been making myself notice the ugly contempt that the TV wife displays to her husband. I see one of those mean commercials and use it as a cue to pounce on my husband and kiss him all over.

Because I got people. Specifically, I’ve got one person who deigns to do my taxes and protect me and my fellow Americans from dangers all over the world. He gets the job done and wins the respect from me he so richly deserves.

(Editor’s note: A 19-year military spouse, Eckhart is a nationally syndicated columnist with CinCHouse.com.)

u OK w/the message u r sending?

By Bridgett Siter

Special to GUIDON

When the kids were little, it was pretty easy to model good

behaviors. I kept my elbows off the table, I refused to tell annoying telemarketers that “No,

Mrs. Siter isn’t home,” and I tried really hard to use my inside voice inside. Mostly, it was easy.

Through the years, my list of “necessary model behaviors” grew exponentially. I don’t want them to drink or swear or run with scissors, so I didn’t



Siter

drink or swear or run with scissors. I didn’t cheat or lie or watch the kind of smut on television that I don’t want them to watch, but I know they do anyway when I’m not home. Mostly, I’ve been successful, if I measure my success by my behavior and not theirs.

Recently, I’ve realized that in one critical area I failed very badly. I talk on my cell phone while driving. And no, I don’t use a hands-free, stick-it-in-your-ear device, as I should.

It’s a dangerous habit that developed gradually, as habits are inclined to do. I’ve never been a phone junkie, not even when I was a teenager. To this day, I hate to be tied to the telephone at home, when I could be

cooking or cleaning or, in a perfect world, napping. There was a time my husband swore I was phone-phobic.

But I came to rely heavily on my cell phone for my job. Conducting business while carpooling kids to and from ball practice just made sense. I was born to multitask. It didn’t take long to make the leap from necessary cell phone conversation to chitchat.

Now my daughter is driving. Like most new drivers, it’s one of her favorite pastimes, second only to talking on the cell phone.

I know that driving while phoning is dangerous, even for experienced drivers like me, but it’s so much more so when the driver is inexperienced and

young enough to think bad things only happen to other people. I hate to think just how great the risk factor increases when the cell phone is being used to text, not talk.

So now I’m forced to confront my own failure and convince my kid she should do as I say, not as she’s seen me do so often. Wish me luck.

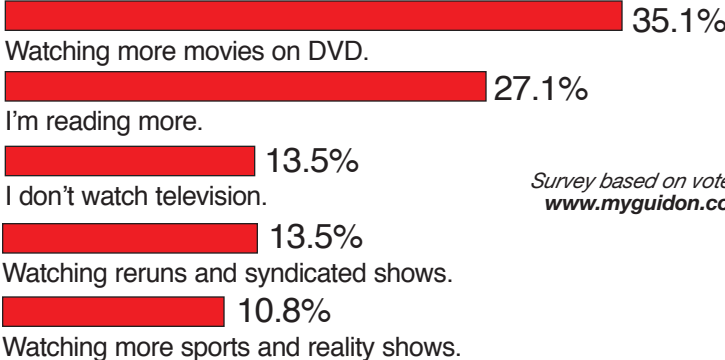
Mine is a cautionary tale for those of you who talk on the cell phone while carting the kids to and fro.

Ask yourself if that’s a behavior you want them to model when they’re in the driver’s seat.

(Editor’s note: Siter is the assistant editor of the Fort Benning, Ga., newspaper, “The Bayonet.”)

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Your political do's and don'ts

By **Capt. Shawn Overton**
Special to GUIDON

As the primary elections heat up, it is important to know that active duty servicemembers and federal civilian employees are encouraged to get involved in political activities. What follows is a list of political activities active-duty servicemembers and federal civilian employees may or may not engage in.

Servicemembers on active duty are permitted to engage in the following political activities:

❑ Participate in local non-partisan political activities (activities that do not support or relate to particular candidates or issues identified with national or state political parties), so long as the servicemember is not in uniform and the activity does not require government property or resources, interfere with duty, or imply government involvement;

❑ Registering to vote, voting, and promoting other military members to exercise their voting rights, so long as such encouragement does not constitute an attempt to interfere or influence the outcome of the election;

❑ Expressing personal opinions to include writing letters to the editor communicating personal views, but not as a representative of the Armed Forces;

● Comments should be attributed to the servicemember in his/her individual capacity, and should not be ascribed to the Armed Forces by use of military rank or position.

● Letters to the editor cannot be part of an organized letter-writing campaign or a solicitation of votes for or against a political party, partisan political

cause, or candidate.

● Commissioned officers must be mindful of Article 88, UCMJ, which makes it a punitive offense to use contemptuous words against the President, Vice President, Congress, the Secretary of Defense, or the Secretary of a military department. Using such language in a written publication or uttering these words in the presence of military subordinates aggravates the offense.

❑ Making monetary contributions to a political organization, party or committee;

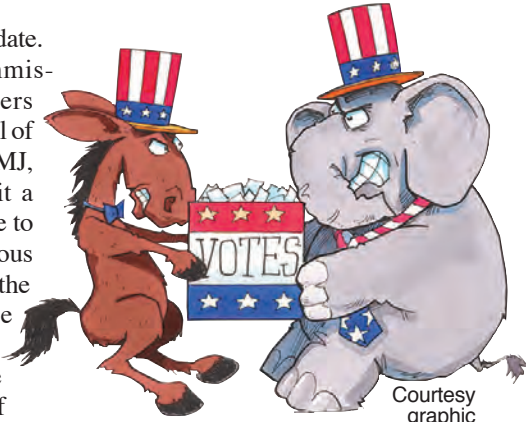
❑ Signing petitions for specific legislative action or placing a candidate's name on the ballot, if the signing is done as a private citizen and not as a representative of the Armed Forces;

❑ Displaying a bumper sticker on the member's private vehicle, but not a large poster or banner;

❑ Joining a political club and attending partisan and nonpartisan political meetings and rallies as a spectator. Servicemembers may not attend when in military uniform, during duty hours, or when violence is likely to result or the activities would constitute a breach of law and order.

Servicemembers on active duty are prohibited from engaging in the following activities:

❑ Using one's official authority to influence or interfere with an election, soliciting votes for a particular candidate or issue, or requiring or soliciting political contributions from others;



❑ Running for the nomination, or as a candidate for election, to a partisan political office or holding such political office to include state or local civil office;

❑ Participating in partisan political management, campaigns, or conventions (except as a spectator not in uniform), or making speeches before a partisan political gathering, including any gathering that promotes a partisan political party, candidate, or cause;

❑ Attending partisan events as an official representative of the Armed Forces or serving in any official capacity as a sponsor of a partisan political club;

❑ Displaying large political signs, banners, or posters on private vehicles;

❑ Promoting political dinners or fundraising events, distributing partisan political literature, or conducting a political opinion survey under the auspices of a partisan political group;

❑ Participating in any radio, television, or other program or group discussion as an advocate for or against a partisan political party, candidate, or cause;

❑ Soliciting or otherwise engaging in fundraising activities in Federal offices or facilities for

a partisan political cause or candidate to include selling tickets for, or otherwise actively promoting, political dinners and similar fundraising events;

❑ Making a contribution to, or receiving a contribution from, another member of the Armed Forces or a federal civilian employee for the purpose of promoting a political objective or cause, including a political campaign; and

❑ Giving speeches, writing articles, or providing public comments that contain political material in one's capacity as a service representative. Similarly, command newspapers cannot contain campaign news, partisan discussions, cartoons, editorials, or commentaries.

Federal civilian employees are permitted to engage in the following political activities:

❑ Registering to vote, voting, and encouraging other federal employees to exercise their voting rights;

❑ Expressing opinion on non-partisan political subjects to include participating in non-partisan civic, community, social, labor or professional organizations;

❑ Participating in political conventions, rallies, or other gatherings;

❑ Contributing money to political organizations and being a guest at a political fundraiser; and

❑ Participating in elections and actively participating in political campaigns to include the following activities:

● Displaying political pictures, signs, stickers, buttons, but not while on duty, in a government office, or on a government vehicle;

● Endorsing or opposing

NCO of the Quarter



Staff Sgt. David Kaltenborn was selected as the 43rd Adjutant General Battalion (Reception) noncommissioned officer of the Quarter.

Kaltenborn is assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 43rd AG (Reception).

He is originally from New York.



partisan candidates in political advertisements, broadcasts or campaign literature; and

● Attending and addressing a political convention, caucus, or rally on behalf of a candidate.

Federal civilian employees are prohibited from engaging in the following political activities:

❑ Using employee's official authority or influence to fundraise or to interfere with or affect the result of an election;

❑ Personally soliciting political contributions from the general public through a fundraising speech or knowingly soliciting, accepting, or receiving a political contribution from a subordinate (an employee under his/her supervisory authority or control);

❑ Running for the nomination or as a candidate for election to a partisan political office;

❑ Participating in any

political activity while on duty, while in a federal workplace, or while wearing a uniform or official insignia;

❑ Engaging in a political activity using a U.S. government owned or leased vehicle or using any other government resources while participating in a political activity; and

❑ Hosting or sponsoring a political fundraiser. However, an employee's spouse may host or sponsor the fundraiser that the employee may attend.

The above are not all inclusive and questions concerning whether a particular political activity is allowed can be resolved by obtaining an advisory opinion from the Office of Staff Judge Advocate, Administrative Law Division at 596.0626.

(Editor's note: Overton is the administrative law attorney with the Fort Leonard Wood Staff Judge Advocate office.)

BRIEFS

Hospital holiday hours

General Leonard Wood Army Community Hospital will reduce its operations, Feb. 18, to celebrate Presidents Day.

All inpatient clinics and pharmacies, including the PX Branch Pharmacy, will be closed for patient visits, Feb. 18. Hospital operations resume regular hours, Feb. 19.

While the main hospital reduces operations, the emergency room will be fully operational to manage urgent and emergent situations. The ER telephone number is 596.0456. Chronic conditions or routine follow-up evaluations should be made through the GLWACH appointment system at 866.299.4234.

The Consolidated Troop Medical Clinic will also be closed Feb. 18. The CTMC will resume regular hours, Feb. 19. Soldiers needing urgent medical care during this time should visit the emergency room.

Questions during this period should be directed to the GLWACH Staff Duty Officer at 596.1784/1787 or to the emergency room staff.

Retirement briefing

The Fort Leonard Wood Retirement Services office has scheduled a pre-retirement briefing, Feb. 19, 8 a.m. to noon, in the Lincoln Hall Auditorium. Attendance is mandatory for all Soldiers with approved retirements, or if the Soldier has 18 years of service or more and has not attended a previous pre-retirement briefing.

The briefing will include counseling of rights, benefits and privileges to which retired military personnel and their dependents may be entitled. Spouses are encouraged to attend.

For more information, contact Beverly Rowe, retirement services officer, at 596.0947.

Housekeeper wanted

The Fort Leonard Wood Thrift Shop is now accepting applications for a housekeeper position. Applicants must have a valid military identification card. Applications are available at the Thrift Shop, Bldg. 204, during regular business hours, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Applications must

be submitted by close of business, Feb. 14. Call 329.4707 for more information.

CFC needs volunteer organization

The Local Federal Coordinating Committee on Fort Leonard Wood is now accepting applications through Monday, from organizations interested in serving as the Principal Combined Fund Organization for the Fall 2008 Combined Federal Campaign.

The PCFO may serve for up to three campaign periods, which will be subject for renewal each year. For more information, log on to Web site www.opm.gov/cfc/html/cfc-regulations.doc, or contact Ronacia Jordan at 563.8399, or e-mail ronacia.jordan@us.army.mil.

Change of challenge

The Interservice Fitness Challenge has been re-scheduled to Feb. 23. The 14th Military Police Brigade is scheduled to host the event.

Retention team recruiting

The Mobile Retention Training Team is looking for members. The MRTT is scheduled to conduct opportunities to meet the team in Thurman Hall, Room 1521, March 3-7. The team is scheduled to talk with potential team members and answer questions about the MRTT's mission.

For more information, contact your brigade career counselor.


Change of Responsibility

The 554th Engineer Battalion is scheduled to conduct a change-of-responsibility ceremony at 2 p.m., Friday, in the Engineer Regimental Room at the John P. Mahaffey Museum Complex, Bldg. 1607. Command Sgt. Maj. Stephen Kammerdiener is scheduled to relinquish responsibility to Command Sgt. Maj. Richard St.Cyr.


A retirement dinner honoring Kammerdiener is scheduled in the 554th Engineer Battalion classroom in Bldg. 1704 at 3 p.m., following the ceremony.

To RSVP or for more information, contact Traci Kuehl at 596.0818 or e-mail her at traci.kuehl@conus.army.mil.

WEATHER



Thursday
Partly cloudy,
high 42,
low 28.



Friday
Partly cloudy,
high 51,
low 28.



Saturday
Partly cloudy,
high 38,
low 14.



Sunday
Partly cloudy,
high 26,
low 22.

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Detachments spend six weeks on Fort Leonard Wood

Story and photos by Robert Johnson
Managing editor

An aircraft is on fire and every second counts as firefighting teams attempt to control and extinguish the burning aviation fuel. The heat is intense; the smoke is solid black and the risk to equipment and human life is off the charts.

Fortunately, this is not a scenario that crews face on a regular basis, but it is one that Fort Leonard Wood firefighters facilitated in the training of fire fighting detachments from Fort Campbell, Ky., Friday.

"This is a simulated aircraft fire or crash scene," said Spc. Scott McGonigal, 562nd Fire Fighting Detachment. "We're simulating this crash to help train the 550th and 508th Fire Fighting Detachments from Fort Campbell. This scenario will help train them on their pump procedures and their firefighting techniques."

The actual "crash scene" is a burn pit, where 200 gallons of jet fuel float on a pool of water. Once lit by the instructor, the fire crews will advance against the burning pit and extinguish the fire, McGonigal said.

While water is never recommended for an oil-based fuel fire, the crews used

water in Friday's scenario for a very specific reason explained Fort Leonard Wood Fire Department Capt. Gary Smith.

"We train with water because it's harder to put this kind of fire out with water. In a real situation, the detachment would use foam, but this (using water) builds their confidence in their ability to control the fire," Smith said.

The 508th and 550th FF Dets. came to Fort Leonard Wood as part of a pre-deployment training exercise for the unit they are attached to, the 591 Sapper Company, 326th Engineer Battalion, Fort Campbell. Firefighting detachments are normally required to "deploy" with the unit they are attached to, but currently there are no immediate plans to send either detachment overseas, said Robert Sperberg, Fort Leonard Wood assistant fire chief.

The Fort Campbell units contacted Staff Sgt. Ronald Wood, 562nd FF Det. noncommissioned officer-in-charge, about training opportunities at Fort Leonard Wood, as neither the 550th nor the 508th FF Det. work with the Fort Campbell garrison fire department on a regular basis, Sperberg said.

Wood coordinated with Assistant Chief Mark Pressly, Fort Leonard Wood Fire Department training officer, to develop a training schedule for the Fort Campbell fire fighting detachments before they deployed to Fort Leonard Wood for six weeks of training, Sperberg said. Pressly and Wood also made arrangements with Joseph Brown, Fort Leonard Wood Fire

Department acting chief, for the visiting firefighters to work shifts with post firefighters to give them additional real-world experience.

In addition to aircraft crash training, the units were also trained during a simulated structural fire in American Eagle Housing, a live fire structural exercise at the post fire department's training facility, water rescue, auto extraction, flammable liquids live fire training and driver and pump operator certification, Sperberg said.

With their training complete, the 12 Soldiers from the 508th and 550th will depart for Fort Campbell, Friday, but not without sharing their appreciation for their hosts.

"We truly appreciate the hospitality extended and the training provided to us by the Fort Leonard Wood Fire Department and the 562nd Fire Fighting Detachment. This has provided our Soldiers an outstanding opportunity to receive priceless real world experience and training opportunities that will make them safer, more proficient and improve the protection they provide their fellow Soldiers in theater," said Sgt. Javier Garciabaez, 550th FF Det. noncommissioned officer-in-charge.



TOP LEFT: Pfc. Joshua Dean, 508th Fire Fighting Detachment, and Spc. Brandon Harmon, 550th Fire Fighting Detachment, take a break from aircraft crash training, Friday. **ABOVE:** Firefighters advance on an aircraft fuel fire in the Fort Leonard Wood burn pit, Friday. **LEFT:** Two fire fighting teams spray water onto the burn pit fire, Friday. The firefighters use water to control the blaze in the training environment, but would use foam in a real-life scenario.

Fort Leonard Wood tax center increases staff, returns

Story and photo by Luke Waack
GUIDON Staff

Some people having their income taxes prepared at the Fort Leonard Wood Tax Center are discovering a big benefit when using the free service; more money in their pockets.

The reason the tax center can offer this quality of service is simple. For the 2008 tax season, the center has twice as many people certified to prepare tax returns than in 2007. This has led to an increase in the facility's ability to serve the community.

The tax center two-tier quality review system is double-checking returns and giving lucky customers a welcome phone call when they qualify for an additional tax deduction or credit.

"We have nine civilians and nine Soldiers preparing taxes and a three-member quality review team. We are doing twice as many returns this year, and we have one of the best accuracy



Spc. David Turner, Company B, 577th Engineer Battalion, schedules an appointment for Dennis Kiska, retiree, as Spc. Theodore Drewlo, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 577th Engr. Bn., looks on.

rates worldwide," said Capt. Durward Johnson, Fort Leonard Wood Tax Center officer-in-charge.

"If people want to get their taxes done accurately and for free, they should come to the tax

center. Our quality review is above and beyond what civilian companies do; not even all Army tax centers do it, but we do it here," Johnson said.

After the tax filer leaves their initial visit to the Tax Center, the

"I had my taxes done last Monday. Tuesday, they sent me an e-mail saying that in the quality review, they discovered another deduction we were eligible for. It increased the size of the return by \$400."

Jim Rayfield
Military retiree

return undergoes further review for an increase in refund amounts.

"With each return, I open it up and look at every line," said Carla Wiggins, quality review supervisor with three years of experience.

Every member of the tax preparation staff is certified by the IRS.

"I'm certified as high as they will let me go," Wiggins said.

The quality control team has helped several customers maximize their returns.

"I've been getting my taxes done here since 1994. It saves me some money and I'm satisfied with the service. This year, they called me and told me the

quality control folks found an error and I'm getting back even more money," said David Weems, military retiree.

Weems is just one of the people to benefit from the increase in staffing and quality control at the tax center this year.

"I had my taxes done last Monday. Tuesday, they sent me an e-mail saying that in the quality review, they discovered another deduction we were eligible for. It increased the size of the return by \$400," said Jim Rayfield, military retiree.

Patrons of the tax center should bring their social security cards, bank routing information and all tax documents. With all the proper information, a Tax

Center customer can have their return filed in 15 to 60 minutes.

Not only is the tax preparation service accurate, it is relatively fast.

On average, customers don't have to wait long for service, Johnson said.

"If they have an appointment, we can get them in within 10 minutes, walk-ins may wait half an hour," Johnson said.

The tax center is open Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. The center is located in Bldg. 6150, Indiana Ave. between 4th Street and Minnesota Avenue. Customers can call for an appointment at 596.1040.

Home

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installation, they won't want to leave.

"Soldiers usually come to Fort Leonard Wood kicking and screaming. What we want to have happen after you've experienced Fort Leonard Wood, is that you leave kicking and screaming, that you have the best facilities, and that we really are world class in all we do," Megnia said.

Soldiers with decades of Army experience said the new quarters are extraordinary.

"I'm very impressed with the barracks so far. I've been in the Army 22 years, and I've never seen anything like it," said Sgt.

Maj. Bryan Steele, Training Support Battalion.

The first official resident of the complex expressed his opinion of what the new barracks represents.



Wilkins

life, an opportunity not to be enclosed in small rooms," Wilkins said.

The new village is the first of five phases. The second phase is currently under construction and should be finished in September.

Airborne

From Page A1

"It is always good to show the Soldiers what the Army has in store for them beyond basic training. In basic training, it is kind of sheltered and they are getting a narrowed vision of what the Army is, and when you see something like this that is out of the normal from, training, waking up, running and all that stuff, it actually motivates the Soldiers to do better in the Army," said Sgt. 1st Class James Williams, Co. C, 795th MP Bn., drill sergeant.

Pvt. Jeremy Witt said he always wanted to be an airborne Soldier, but really didn't think it was a possibility for him. After the 37th Engr. Bn. visited, shared their information and did the jump, Witt found out his dream was closer than he thought.

"I cannot wait to go to Airborne School — if I can get in — but it is closer than I

thought. I really hope the drill sergeants can help me get my packet together. I have always wanted to do this, but with this visit, now I know I can," Witt said.

Pvt. Ashley Ledbetter said seeing a once-in-a-lifetime event like the jump from the paratroopers adds to the many milestones she has experienced during basic training.

"This really can give you a lot of motivation and gives you something to strive for and work for during training," Ledbetter said.

Grubb said it was a huge opportunity to have his Soldiers learn about more possibilities after basic training. One lesson could not be stressed enough — continued learning.

"The Soldiers did learn about what it is like to be a paratrooper and to be in an airborne unit," Grubb said. "But they also



Fort Bragg, N.C., paratroopers land on Fort Leonard Wood as part of an Airborne School recruiting demonstration, Saturday.

talked about that there is more after basic training, and there are so many schools out there and how they can help out with their careers ... not just airborne."

WAR ON TERRORISM

Attacks in Iraq down to two-year low

By Fred Baker III
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Attacks have dropped in Baghdad to levels seen in 2005, a senior commander in Iraq said, Friday.

Coalition forces also are finding and clearing more bombs than they have in the past four years, Brig. Gen. Joseph Anderson, Multinational Corps Iraq chief of staff, told reporters in the Pentagon via satellite from Camp

Liberty, in Baghdad. This comes on the heels of the new year’s offensive, Operation Phantom Phoenix, aimed at driving al-Qaida and other extremists from safe havens in outlying provinces.

In the past week of operations, the overall number of attacks nationwide remained down and below the average of the past three months, Anderson said.

“The security situation today is about the same as we experienced statistically in early 2005,” the

commander said. Weekly attacks in the Baghdad security districts for the past 15 weeks matched levels last seen consistently in 2005. Bombings increased last week, but remained below the long-term average for the 23rd week in a row, he said. Throughout Iraq, weekly casualties decreased by three percent last week, continuing to remain below the long-term average for the 21st week in a row, Anderson said. Civilian casualties have dropped from 1,700 in January 2007

to 170 this month. Part of the success is due to locals being more willing to turn over extremists’ hideouts and weapons caches, Anderson said. As local citizens feel more secure, they are coming forward with information on extremists’ activities in their villages and provinces. “The extremists’ ability to intimidate the populous is clearly diminishing. Iraqi citizens across the country are actively engaging the extremists,” Anderson said.

Concerned local citizens organized into neighborhood watch-type groups now number about 70,000 across the country and are helping fill critical security roles where they live, especially in areas where there are few Iraqi security forces. “We will not allow al-Qaida and other extremists to take sanctuary in any part of the country,” Anderson said. “We are not leaving safe areas or holes. We will not give up gains already achieved by the coalition.”

Concerned local citizens groups discussed



Photo by Sgt. Timothy Kingston
Pvt. Brandon Johnson, Company B, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, searches the village of Ja’ara, Iraq, for enemy personnel, weapons caches and improvised explosive devices, during a joint clearing operation with concerned local citizens Jan. 17.

More than 70,000 Iraqis involved

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Iraqi concerned local citizens groups are a “boon to security,” and the Iraqi government soon will run this program, the commander of Multinational Security Transitional Command Iraq said, Friday.

Army Lt. Gen. James Dubik told military analysts in a conference call that while the concerned local citizens program now is run by Multinational Corps Iraq, “the government of Iraq is very much a part of the program, and at some point ... they will run this program.”

The program is an outgrowth of the “Anbar Awakening,” in which local tribal leaders tired of terrorist violence looked to coalition and Iraqi forces for protection and began cooperating with them. Early on, coalition authorities described the groups as neighborhood watch-type organizations, but they have become much more. Concerned local citizens groups have expanded around Iraq and are manning checkpoints, providing intelligence to coalition and Iraqi forces and locating and turning in roadside bombs, those who build the bombs and terror groups that stockpile weapons. About 70,000 Iraqis are involved with the groups today, all funded by the coalition. But the Iraqi government has acknowledged its responsibility to take over the program, Dubik said. The government “recognizes the concerned local citizens have been a boon to

security,” he said. The idea is that roughly 25 to 30 percent of those involved in the groups ultimately will transfer to Iraqi police or military forces, Dubik said. Government ministers recognize the risk in accepting these groups, because some of the members may have been former insurgents, but it’s a risk the government is willing to accept, Dubik said. The general’s command has worked with Iraqi officials to develop a three-tiered vetting system for members of the groups to apply for jobs with the Iraqi police. Tier 1 is vetting applicants through local governments, local coalition forces and local Iraqi commanders, Dubik said. Tier 2 is at the provincial level, and Tier 3 is at the prime minister level with the Iraqi Committee for National Reconciliation. “Once a person is vetted through those three levels, his nomination is moved to the

Ministry of the Interior, the MOI hires that person for a 90-day temporary contract, then a person is hired permanently,” the general said. “It sounds bureaucratic and it is, but we have hired over 10,000 people under this system already, mostly in Baghdad, Anbar and Diyala.” The bureaucratic process, though, also builds in Iraqis the confidence that government is taking pains to hire trustworthy people for the police, he noted. Even hiring as many as 30 percent of those involved with the concerned local citizens groups for the police, however, would leave roughly 50,000 Iraqis now affiliated with the groups without jobs. “The others will go into some other civil service corps, vocational training or other job-related training,” the general said. “That system is still in development.” Dubik said his command will work with Iraqi ministries on this transition.

Operation Browning completed by 3rd ID

Story and photo Sgt. Luis Delgadillo
Army News Service

FOB KALSU, Iraq — For three days, coalition forces weathered harsh cold and deadly pressure-plate improvised explosive devices to secure a foothold in southern Arab Jabour, beginning with an air assault, Jan. 20. Infiltrating areas dominated by al-Qaida in Iraq, infantrymen of Company A, 1-30th Infantry, 3rd Infantry Division began their push through the farm fields. Capt. Neil Hollenbeck, Co. A commander, and his Soldiers would initially be cut off from ground supply lines. They had to pack enough food and water to sustain themselves for three days while arrangements were made to have supplies flown into the territory, which had never seen a sustained Coalition presence. Hollenbeck’s first and third platoon, a team of snipers, an Army explosive ordnance disposal team, a dog team and a tactical psychological operations team made up the assaulting force. Local Iraqis that had been driven out of their homes by al-Qaida insurgents acted as guides for the troops. Arriving at their destination, one platoon built up defensive positions while another went out to clear buildings and investigate a report of two insurgents killed by an air weapons team earlier in the day. With daylight running out, Soldiers of Co. A, 3rd platoon, found the dead insurgents in the driveway of a

dilapidated farmhouse. A search confirmed the two men had illegal weapons. Coalition troops found two AK-47s, four hand grenades, a handgun and ammunition for the weapons in their possession. Staff Sgt. Nicolaas Koomen, infantry squad leader with 3rd platoon, said the two were on the battalion’s most wanted list. Since their arrival to Arab Jabour last June, 1-30th Infantry has pursued insurgent leaders in an effort to eliminate AQI’s intimidation and influence of the farming community’s residents. With the assistance of the Iraqis, 1-30th Inf. Regt. was able to dominate northern Arab Jabour and other surrounding areas, effectively eliminating AQI’s ability to blend in with the local population. This brought about a wave of change, resulting in people taking responsibility for their own security in the area. Insurgents fled south and re-established defensive perimeters consisting of house-borne IEDs, and various other explosive traps for coalition troops. “This is the place where we’ve pushed all the al-Qaida to,” said Sgt. Walter Wood Jr., an infantry team leader with 3rd platoon. “They have no place to go but across the river.” Koomen said the first day’s operations went off without a hitch and he hoped the coming days would bring them more of the same. The streak of good fortune would continue.



Shortly after air assaulting into a field, Pfc. Kenneth Armbrister, an infantryman with Company A, 1-30th Infantry, scans for enemy activity during Operation Browning in southern Arab Jabour, Jan 20.

Searching nearby homes, coalition forces found only a handful still occupied. According to the remaining residents, insurgents had come through and told them Soldiers would destroy homes and kill families when they arrived. The few families who did remain, though cautious at first, warmed up to Soldiers of Co. A, and volunteered information on locations of lethal traps left behind by insurgents. Over the next two days with the assistance of their supporting elements, Soldiers found a weapons cache and a total of 12 IEDs of various victim-operated initiating devices.

The airdrop of food and water came the night of Jan. 21, and the ground assault convoy consisting of other headquarters elements made its way toward the troops. The headquarters elements were led by a route clearance team of Soldiers from Company E of the 1-30th Inf. Regt., who had been clearing roads to the Soldiers for days. They reached Co. A the evening of Jan. 22, and continued past clearing vital routes near the area. “I’m very pleased with the outcome so far,” Hollenbeck said. “I am not at all relaxed about everything we have left to do.”

Hollenbeck attributes much of the success to intense methodical planning, the experience and expertise of his Soldiers and the contributions of vital enablers such as Explosive Ordnance Detachment and military working dog teams. With much left to do in their efforts against AQI influence in Southern Arab Jabour, Hollenbeck and his Soldiers have now dug in. They’ve established a base of operations and are ready and able to project the necessary combat power needed to deal with areas still occupied by AQI. (Editor’s note: Delgadillo serves with 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO.)

Task Force Kelly shows off skills while deployed in Afghanistan

By Masayo Cole
Army News Service

When the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade assigned to Bagram, Afghanistan, needed their battle-damaged CH-47D helicopter repaired, Task Force Kelly was there to make the repairs. The task force, a group of Army National Guard Soldiers

from Mississippi and Illinois, immediately provided critical repairs on the CH-47D, a Chinook helicopter used for heavy lift of passengers and cargo. Task Force Kelly, part of the U.S. Army Materiel Command’s 401st Army Field Support Brigade Afghanistan, is an Aviation Classification Repair Activity Depot in theater.

The team has completed 4,750 man-hours of depot repairs on helicopters such as the UH-60s, AH-64s and CH-47s. This work has ranged from the recent repair of a CH-47D with a crack in the skin to repairing a 240 beam. The CH-47D crack was made up of compound curves, requiring the mechanics to shape a softer

metal to fit the area. This repair took two weeks to complete with two teams working 10-hour shifts. Two teams, working 12-hour shifts, were also needed for repairs to a CH-47D Chinook 240 beam, the main floor beam that supports the floor, forward cargo hook and forward landing gear. This repair took about one and a half weeks to complete, two weeks less than

estimated, and was a first for an AVCRAD in theater. “The team was put to the test with all of their sheet metal mechanics skills to complete this mission,” said Lt. Col. Clarence Kelly, Theater Aviation Maintenance Program officer in charge. The efforts of Task Force Kelly resulted in thousands of dollars saved by repairs done in

theater, timely maintenance support, and repaired equipment returned to the Soldier. Always ready to support, this National Guard team remains constant in their dedication to keeping the Soldiers safe. “Our motto is ‘keeping them in the fight’ and every member of TAMP Afghanistan is living up to that.



7th CST gives Branson special kind of show

Story and photo by John Quin
Special to GUIDON

BRANSON, Mo. — The two masked men in protective suits cautiously crossing a room at the Welk Resort in Branson could have passed for extras in a science fiction film, Jan. 26 – 27.

Carrying monitoring equipment, they steadily made their way around a suite converted into a makeshift laboratory. Every now and then, a muffled voice emanated from beneath one of the masks as the men radioed the operations center outside.

Lt. Richard Sambolin of the Missouri National Guard’s 7th Civil Support Team, was training the men as part of a joint exercise. Following them around the room, he shouted instructions loud enough that they could hear him through their suits.

“Photograph everything,” Sambolin yelled. “Anything you don’t take a picture of, you’ve got to remember. When we leave this room, you shouldn’t have to remember anything.”

In a real incident, the team would be responsible for providing law enforcement officers with details of the contaminated room. Sambolin moved from man to man, pointing out markings on

maps and posters, and names on brochures and newspapers.

The training exercise was designed to highlight a relatively new danger faced by first responders — homemade labs, said Don Scott, a contractor with PM Tech, who ran the exercise.

“There are only two reasons to have a lab — to make money making meth or to do harm,” Scott said. “When you see things like maps on the wall, you know they’re not after money.”

Four or five such labs turn up each year, Scott said. Because first responders usually assume they are dealing with a common meth lab, police and firefighters are at great risk of contamination before they realize they’re dealing with something new.

The exercise also breeds familiarity between the Civil Support Team and local first responders. Lt. Col. David Boyle, the team’s commander, has made such joint training sessions a top priority. Anyone who visits the team’s headquarters on Fort Leonard Wood can immediately see the scope and success of that effort in three large glass cases filled with patches from public safety organizations across the state.

“When we take part in exercises like this, we’re really trying to have first responders from all areas integrate into

the team” Boyle said. “Here in Branson, we not only worked with the Homeland Security Response Team from Branson / Taney County, we had first responders from St. Louis work in our survey section. Other responders from St. Louis and Jefferson City, Mo., served as observers. It was a model exercise for integration between the CST and first responders.”

For the Civil Support Team, it is important to learn where specific organizations are strong and where the team can help them. They also learn about specific organizations’ structures and dynamics, which in the case of a real emergency will be integral in mounting an effective response.

For local responders, working with the team is a valuable opportunity to learn how another organization operates and become more familiar with a valuable state resource.

“If anything did happen here, because of the relationship we’ve forged with the CST, it’s going to go really smoothly,” said Danny Rylott, a battalion chief with the West Taney County Fire Protection District. “Everybody does what they’re good at.”

(Editor’s note: Quin is a unit public affairs representative with the Missouri Army National Guard.)



Lt. Richard Sambolin helps Sgt. Yvonne Urquieta, both 7th CST, Missouri Army National Guard, properly seal a sample taken during a training exercise, Jan 26, in Branson, Mo.

Tax mistakes all of us should avoid when filing

By Capt. D. Elton Johnson
Special to GUIDON

Making mistakes when preparing and filing your tax return can inflict a special kind of pain. Even simple errors can cost you time, money and tons of aggravation. While many errors are easy to avoid, others are pretty complicated. But worry not — the Fort Leonard Wood Tax Center can fix the mistakes and relieve you of stress. These highly trained, IRS-certified tax preparers do the work for you. And here’s the great part: it will cost you absolutely nothing — the service is free.

According to the IRS, the most common taxpayer mistakes are:



Johnson

Claiming the wrong filing status

Some taxpayers choose to file single, when they’re actually married, while others file married when they are single. Sorry, but you can’t do this. Your filing status is determined by your marital status as of Dec. 31. Your status before that date really

doesn’t matter for tax purposes. Either you were married or you were single. If you were married, you can file either jointly or married filing separately. You may qualify for “head of household,” but you have to satisfy certain requirements. You don’t qualify just because you consider yourself the head of your household.

By claiming the wrong status, you could effectively destroy your eligibility for the child tax credit, the earned-income credit and exemptions for dependents. Let one of our tax preparers help you select your correct filing status.

Using wrong Social Security numbers

The Social Security numbers you list for yourself and your dependents on your tax return, along with your legal name, must match exactly with your Social Security card and your dependent’s Social Security cards. Otherwise, the IRS computers will reject your credits and deductions, including the earned-income credit and child tax credit. This will lead to owing more taxes or getting a smaller refund.

Using incorrect forms



Courtesy photo

and schedules

All tax returns, including both e-filed returns and paper, are inputted into a computer database. Certain items like income, expenses, credits and deductions require the filing of certain forms and schedules. For example, you file your employee business expenses on Schedule A without attaching Form 2106, the IRS database creates a flag. The more flags you get, the more likely that you will get audited.

Forgetting to sign and date the return

This one is easy. If you and/or your spouse don’t sign the return, you haven’t filed. Both spouses must sign a joint return, unless you have a valid power of attorney for your spouse or your spouse has filled out and signed the IRS Form 2848. If you haven’t filed, you might be subject to all kinds of penalties, not to mention interest on any amounts you may owe in taxes.

Claiming ineligible dependents

When the IRS started requiring Social Security numbers to claim dependents, millions of dependents disappeared. The reasons are too numerous to list here. Now the qualification criteria to claim dependent exemptions is technical and very specific. With nontraditional families, there are the exceptions, the

exclusions to the exceptions, and the exceptions when the exclusions don’t apply.

Not claiming the earned income credit

So many people do not claim this credit that the IRS reports this failure as its number six top taxpayer mistake. In fact, the state of Missouri estimates that \$75 million of earned income credit goes unclaimed every year in the Show Me State, alone. As a consequence, the state of Missouri proclaimed February as Earned Income Credit Month. The problem with this credit is that the provision is confusing, and many people lack the tax sophistication to claim it.

Losing receipts

Many people lose or misplace receipts that they might be able to use for deductions, credits, and other tax savings. If you give to a charity make sure they give you a receipt for the donation. If you pay for child care make sure you tally up the amount you’ve spent and get the provider’s name, address, and taxpayer identification number. If you had to pay for medical expenses without reimbursement, make sure to save these receipts

as well. You will also need your paperwork to prove property tax and mortgage deductions. By saving your receipts, you’re saving yourself money.

If you can avoid making mistakes with your tax return, you’ll save yourself a lot of heartache, time, and money. One way to avoid making these mistakes is letting one of Fort Leonard Wood’s highly-trained, IRS-certified tax preparers do the work for you. Not only will you avoid making mistakes, but you will have your tax return prepared and e-filed for free.

The Fort Leonard Wood Tax Center is standing by ready to help you prepare and file your taxes. All you have to do is call us or visit us at the Tax Center. Remember, we’re free! We are open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., and Tuesdays and Thursdays between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. We accept walk-ins and appointments. The Tax Center is located in building 6150 on Indiana Avenue between 4th Street and Minnesota Avenue. You can reach the Tax Center Office at 596.1040.

(Editor’s note: Johnson is the Fort Leonard Wood Tax Center officer-in-charge.)

DOCUMENTS NEEDED FOR THE 2007 TAX SEASON

<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Your 2006 tax return❑ Social Security cards for you and your dependents❑ Your bank routing number and account number for direct deposits (this can be found on the bottom of your checks)❑ W-2's: wage statements❑ 1099-R's: pension/IRA statements❑ 1099-INT's: interest statements for checking/savings accounts, CDs, etc.❑ 1099-DIV's: dividend statements❑ 1099-MISC's: non-employee compensation, other income, rental income	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Social Security statements❑ Statement from your daycare provider, including name and address of provider, the employer identification number or Social Security number for the provider, and total amount paid for each of your children.❑ College or graduate school statement of tuition paid and scholarships received❑ Interest statements from your student loan provider (if you paid interest on student loans in 2007)❑ Amount contributed to your traditional or Roth IRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ If you think you have enough expenses to itemize on your 2007 return, you will need to bring statements reflecting the amount of home mortgage interest and real estate taxes you paid (form 1098)❑ Information for any personal property taxes paid❑ Information for any medical expenses paid❑ Information for any charitable donations paid❑ If you made non-cash donations over \$500, you will need the name and address of the organization, date of donation, and fair market	<ul style="list-style-type: none">value of items❑ If you sold any stocks during 2007, you will need to bring in a 1099-B reflecting the date and sale of gross proceeds (sales price), and you will need to know the date you purchased the stock and the cost or basis (amount you originally paid for the stock plus commissions and fees paid) (Contact your broker or locate your original purchase statements if they do not provide this information on your 1099-B)❑ If you are divorced, bring a copy of your divorce decree and Form 8332 signed by the custodial parent. (This is a must!)
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Army meeting 2008 recruiting goal of 80,000 new active-duty Soldiers

By C. Todd Lopez
Army News Service

WASHINGTON — The Army is on track to meet its fiscal 2008 recruiting goal of 80,000 new active-duty Soldiers, said the U.S. Army Recruiting Command’s top officer.

During testimony, Jan.31, before the Senate Armed Services Committee’s military personnel subcommittee, Maj. Gen. Thomas Bostick, USAREC commander, told lawmakers his command is also working to help the Army Reserve meet its number.

“We are slightly behind



Bostick

established monthly objectives for the Army Reserve,” he said. “But we are aggressively working with the Army leadership to develop the way ahead to achieve our Army Reserve mission for this year.”

This year, the Army Reserve hopes to meet a recruiting goal of 26,500 new Soldiers.

Bostick said one of the difficulties in meeting recruiting goals is the “incredibly challenging” recruiting environment.

“Less than three out of 10 of our nation’s youth are fully

qualified for service in the Army due to disqualifying medical conditions, criminal records, lack of education credentials or low aptitude test scores,” he said.

Likely exacerbating the issue: the war in Afghanistan and Iraq and its affect on “influencers” of potential recruits.

“Today, parents and influencers are less likely to encourage their family members and other young adults to join the military,” the general said. “Propensity — the desire to enlist in the armed forces — is at its lowest point in two decades.”

Nevertheless, last year some 170,000 Americans stepped forward to enlist in the Army, Army

National Guard and Army Reserve. Additionally, the general said, Soldiers — even those who are serving in or have served in combat — are re-enlisting.

“Our volunteer Soldiers are re-enlisting because they believe in their nation; they believe in their flag and they believe in each other,” he said.

The Army has transformed the recruiting command, restructuring its 41 recruiting battalions and modifying their respective areas of responsibility. The restructuring reduced the size of larger battalions, while increasing the size of some of the smaller ones. This corrected

imbalances in mission responsibilities, Bostick said.

The restructuring also included the formation of two brigades: a special missions brigade to handle administrative functions, logistics and special missions for subordinate brigades; and a medical brigade to provide command and control for the five medical recruiting battalions.

In the medical community, the Army is now ahead by 122 accessories this year compared to last year, the general said, indicating that changes made to the medical recruiting structure have been positive.

“This effort will ensure we

have the right levels of emphasis and expertise working this critically important mission,” Bostick said. “This remains one of our most challenging areas, but we are making significant progress.”

The Army follows Department of Defense guidelines about the quality of civilians that can be recruited into the Army. For instance, at least 90 percent of recruits must have a high school diploma, 60 percent of recruits must score in the I-III-A category or better on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery and no more than 4 percent can score category IV on the enlistment test.

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